

high-paying jobs—mostly in rural areas, where people are reasonably concerned about what this energy transition is going to mean for them. Let's pay people to capture methane, to make the industry viable, to make the product less harmful, and to create high-paying jobs in rural areas in America that need them.

I know I don't have all the answers for how to build a durable climate policy in America, but I know that a sensible approach to methane has to be part of the solution, and that approach has to address not only new oil and gas facilities but existing ones like we have done in Colorado, and that is what this resolution will do. It will restore EPA's obligation to regulate all sources of methane emissions, including existing oil and gas operations, where there are hundreds of thousands of older wells that are responsible for 75 percent of methane emissions from the industry.

It will help us protect the environment and create jobs, and it will show the world that America can come together and that this Senate can come together in a bipartisan way to deal with climate change because, when I think about it, I don't want any of us to come back to this floor 10 years from now or 20 years from now and describe how we have just gone through the worst wildfire season ever or the worst hurricane season ever—more likely in the Presiding Officer's State than in my State—or the worst drought in our history.

I want them to come back and celebrate how America led the world to overcome the climate threat. I want them to praise the era of innovation and job creation unleashed across the country, and I want them to point out what we did in this Congress with this vote to put America on a path to protect our planet, grow our economy, and fulfill our responsibility to our kids and our grandkids.

So I urge my colleagues, every single one of them, to cast a vote for this important methane policy and to set us on the bipartisan course we need to create if we are going to have durable climate change policy in this country and if America is going to lead the world.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, tomorrow evening, across the Capitol, President Biden will deliver his first State of the Union Address. As we continue to make headway in our fight against COVID-19, I expect the President to reflect on the tremendous progress we have made and encourage Americans to get vaccinated. So far so good.

But I also believe he will try to frame the nearly \$2 trillion partisan bill that was rammed through Congress earlier this year as the driving force behind that progress, even though less than 10 percent of the bill was related to COVID-19.

I expect the President will call on Congress to pass his so-called infrastructure bill, which is similar to the COVID-19 relief bill in that it is a partisan bill having very little to do with the title of the bill itself. Only about 5 percent, in fact, goes toward roads and bridges, something we would all define as infrastructure.

I am hopeful that the President will finally announce a plan to address the crisis at our southern border because, so far, the administration has been largely silent. The crisis at the southern border is real; it is big; and it is growing. We are breaking all the wrong kinds of records, including the numbers of unaccompanied children, total monthly border crossings, and the capacity levels at our care facilities.

In March, we saw the highest number of border crossings on record, more than 172,000 individuals. That was a dramatic increase from the already eye-popping 100,000 in February—February, 100,000; March, 172,000; and, trust me, it is going to get nothing but worse.

Nearly 19,000 of these individuals were unaccompanied children, the highest numbers we have ever seen in a single month. Sometimes people will say: That child came to America all by himself or herself. I want to disabuse my colleagues of any notion that a child—small child—would make that trip to the United States “by themselves.” These children are being turned over to criminal organizations that are paid by the head to transport them from their country of origin into the United States and, unfortunately, these human smugglers, known in my part of the country as “coyotes,” care nothing for the welfare of those children. It is only the money that they could produce by transporting them to the United States that they care about.

It is true we know that a spike in migration is not an entirely new phenomena and, sadly, neither is the dramatic increase in the number of children, but the current surge is unlike any we have experienced in at least the last 20 years, according to Director Mayorkas.

These eye-popping numbers are compounded by a deadly pandemic. We have never seen that before. The pandemic, of course, has made once routine tasks like transporting and caring for migrants incredibly dangerous to the men and women who are performing those duties.

In an effort to downplay the seriousness of the border crisis or to defer attention from it altogether, the administration has spent literally no time talking about it, especially when compared to the time and energy that it has dedicated to things like climate change.

In fact, the Biden administration has spent the first several weeks of the surge denying that there is anything wrong at the border. Then they came up with some creative euphemisms to describe what has happened. They

called it a challenge. They called it a situation. They called it a mess. Well, as long as you didn't call it a crisis, they didn't seem too bothered by it.

A month ago, the President tapped the Vice President to lead efforts to address this crisis, which I thought was a positive sign, until I realized Vice President HARRIS acted as though the President had handed her a hand grenade and had pulled the pin because she couldn't get away from it fast enough, saying the next day that, well, her job is purely diplomatic in nature. She hasn't made a single trip to the border and, apparently, does not plan to do so at all.

The President has given lip service to encouraging migrants not to come, but those statements mean absolutely nothing when all of the other signals being sent by this administration are: There is a green light and a welcome mat out for migrants to come to the United States.

The situation is such that we are reaching a breaking point, and the Vice President and President could recognize that if they took the time to look and to learn from the very same people I have learned from, the experts who do these terribly difficult jobs along the border.

As you can imagine, I have spent a lot of time listening to those folks because I represent them. They are my constituents. I visited border communities and heard from the Border Patrol officers, mayors, county judges, and NGOs, nongovernmental organizations, that are doing the best they can dealing with overwhelming numbers.

I had the opportunity to actually talk to some of the migrants themselves about their journeys to our border and what brought them here. In the Rio Grande Valley, I spoke with three young mothers holding their crying infants less than a mile from the river they crossed into the United States. They had just undergone preliminary health screenings and were waiting for a bus to take them to a processing center.

And, please, our colleagues should understand these migrants are not trying to get away from the Border Patrol. They are literally walking up to the Border Patrol and turning themselves in because they realize that is the next step to their being placed into the interior of the United States and completing their journey.

Of course, as you can imagine, each of these mothers was hopeful. They made it to the United States and knew that as a family unit with young children they would be cared for by our government and then released into the interior of the United States. One of the mothers paid \$3,600, she said, to get here. Another paid \$6,000. This is big business for the smugglers and the criminal organizations that charge thousands of dollars to bring migrants to the U.S. border.

I think it is important to note that this is not just a Mexico-Central American phenomena. A couple of months

ago, when I was down at the Del Rio sector of the Border Patrol, the Border Patrol Chief showed us a slide with the names of 54 different countries represented by the people who were detained coming across the Del Rio sector just so far this year—54 different countries.

As I said, many of these “customers” are children traveling with no parents. We know the journey is not a safe or easy one. In fact, it is dangerous, and it is hard, and many children arrive in critical health, having endured days, weeks, and months on the road. And the tragic fact is, some of these children don’t make it. They die en route.

I have heard horrific stories of physical and sexual abuse that occurs at the hands of the criminals, cartels, and human smugglers, and others traveling in a large caravan of immigrants. At the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center in Dallas, which is now serving as a shelter for migrant boys, I talked to one young man who endured a 3-month-long trek on foot from Central America to the United States. He told us he slept in the jungles along the way and that food was scarce. As you can imagine, he was happy now to be in a shelter receiving three square meals a day with a roof over his head.

These stories are not unique. Many of us have seen the heartbreaking video of a young boy abandoned by smugglers in the Rio Grande Valley, dropped from the top of the wall into the interior of the United States. And we have read the story about a young girl who drowned trying to cross the Rio Grande River. And we have seen where the smugglers who care so little for the welfare of the people they are smuggling into the United States—and in one instance they threw a 6-month-old child into the river, knowing the Border Patrol would be diverted in order to save the child, which thankfully they did, while they skedaddled into the United States.

I think it is heartbreaking that these children are enduring this sort of trauma, and it is infuriating that cartels and criminal organizations are getting richer in the process.

So make no mistake, there is a crisis at the border and the policies of the Biden administration helped make it worse. Despite warnings from folks on both sides of the aisle, the administration revoked policies of the previous administration without any alternative plan in its place. Making matters worse, they entirely failed to prepare for the obvious consequences. Now the question is, What are they going to do to address it?

I believe the American people deserve to hear from President Biden his outline of a plan to address the border crisis and to manage this surge of humanity in a fair and humane way. If the President is still working on that portion of the speech, I would like to make a friendly suggestion.

There is a grassroots plan out there that was built from bottom up by the

Senators and Congressmen most familiar with the crisis. It includes input from the men and women who dealt with migration surges in the past and who are working around-the-clock to manage the consequences of uncontrolled movement of migrants across the border now. It is called the Bipartisan Border Solutions Act.

Senator SINEMA from Arizona, who also represents a border State, and I have introduced this legislation here in the Senate. We are proud to work with two Texans, one Republican and one Democrat, HENRY CUELLAR of Laredo and TONY GONZALES, a Republican in the 23rd Congressional District. He represents, I believe, the largest single section of the U.S.-Mexico border of any Member in Congress. Our bill seeks to address the most urgent problems on the border today. There is more we can and should do, but at least this would address the most urgent problems.

First, it would establish four regional processing centers to streamline the processing of migrants. Right now, the smugglers know that if they flood the zone with children, the Border Patrol are going to have to go off the frontline in order to take care of the children, leaving it wide open for smuggling narcotics and other migrants—narcotics which, by the way, contributed to roughly 88,000 drug overdoses in America alone in the last 12 months.

Our bill would provide protections for migrant children who come into the country without a parent or any relatives.

It would help reduce the immigration court backlog and remove a major pull factor for migrants who do not have a legitimate asylum claim. But it would, more importantly, speed up the process for the most vulnerable migrants who do have a valid asylum claim.

I think these are commonsense reforms that should earn the support of Members from both parties in both Chambers in Congress, as well as a number of respected outside organizations.

We would be glad to receive the support of the administration or at least a phone call so we can begin conversations. Ignoring this crisis will not make it go away. We have spent the last couple of months demonstrating that inaction will only make it worse.

As I said, we have seen surges in the past but never like this. The busiest months are usually April, May, and June, not February and March, which indicates, by historical trends, it is going to get worse and worse and worse. If our facilities and our personnel are overwhelmed today, which they are, and we haven’t yet reached the normal busy season, how much worse are things going to get? How many more children will die in the hands of these criminals on their way to the United States before we decide to take action?

As the Presiding Officer and I have discussed before, there is nobody else to solve these problems except us. On

something as important as this, it seems like a logical area for Republicans and Democrats to work together to try to take at least some modest steps to address this crisis. I hope the President will work with us and be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I was listening intently to the Senator from Texas, who is certainly familiar with the problems on the border. It happens that I spent 30 years down there as a builder and developer many years ago. I got to know the border people. They are trying to do a great job down there against some pretty impossible odds.

You know, one thing I always think about is, it has nothing to do with Central American citizens or Mexicans; it is the people from the Middle East, terrorists from all over. Open borders don’t work. So I applaud him for his efforts on that.

DRINKING WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT OF 2021

Mr. President, this week we have a real opportunity before us to pass the bipartisan Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021.

If you listen only to the national media, you would think that Congress can’t get together on much of anything, but this bill is a real example of how that is not always the case. The reason is simple: Everyone agrees that we need clean, safe, drinking water and to support State and local projects to protect water quality.

There are tangible benefits for communities too. Just consider what the bill does for my State of Oklahoma. First, it will increase the Federal funding for local projects by over \$315 million in the next 5 years, an increase of 123 percent.

More than that, the State retains the control to direct funds to projects they have identified. It is called local support. It is kind of a unique concept. It demonstrates clearly that we who are representing an area know more about the area than people who don’t represent the area.

This will increase funding for local projects. It will also provide needed resources to help Oklahoma achieve its comprehensive water plan, meeting its goal of using no more freshwater in 2060 than was used in 2010.

I am proud to cosponsor this bill because it not only recognizes that urban and rural communities have different water infrastructure needs, but it also provides specific benefits to rural States like my State of Oklahoma.

A month ago, the Water Quality Division director of the State of Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Shellie Chard, testified before the EPW Committee to highlight the challenges facing rural water systems and the innovation that they are using in rural States and communities to ensure safe and affordable drinking

water. She highlighted the need for assistance to small, rural States in complying with government regulations, and this bill does that by giving small and rural States access to Federal funding and assistance in complying with government regulations that are often more burdensome and overbearing for them.

The bill also empowers rural communities to work with technical experts at nonprofit entities and State agencies to implement best practices and more efficiently comply with the Federal regulations. When a small town like Meridian, OK, needs help addressing harmful contaminants in their water system, local rural water organizations can provide consistent help and expertise, and they do. They are out there. They want to help. Dedicating resources to help our rural communities will ensure they spend more of their time and their money on community projects, not navigating a bureaucracy.

More than just taking care of our water infrastructure today, this bill has an eye on the future by reauthorizing the Water Resources Research Act. The Water Resources Research Act supports cutting-edge water research at universities across the country, including Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. OSU will receive research funding over the next 4 years to study wastewater reuse, produced water from oil and gas operations, and more.

The bill will also more than double the funding for the enhanced aquifer recharge research program. This program does essential work to refill the groundwater aquifers, especially in areas with water shortages, to sustain a reliable municipal water supply.

I thank my colleagues Senator CARPER and Senator CAPITO for working together to move this bill through the normal committee process and bring it to the floor. This is what bipartisan means, and we do see this every day, in spite of what you might get from the media. I look forward to this bill being passed and enacted into law quickly. It is important that this not be the end of our bipartisan infrastructure work.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Mr. President, we also need to reauthorize the new surface transportation plan before October 1. I know that it can be done because I did it twice with Senator Boxer. We did the MAP-21 program; that was in 2012. We did the FAST Act in 2015. We were successful because we focused on actual infrastructure—roads, highways, bridges, waterways, and the like.

Senator CAPITO rolled out a meaningful infrastructure package this last week. It is bold and focused on what our country actually needs.

While President Biden and the Biden administration recognize the Republican plan as a starting point, sadly, Senate Democrats dismiss it outright, without even waiting to read it. And

why? Because the extreme left wants to hijack the popularity of infrastructure to pass their Green New Deal agenda.

You know, I had the honor of being with the President and the Vice President in the White House their first week in office. At that time, they were talking about the infrastructure package of the administration. I told the President at that time that one of the problems I have with what I feel is going to be in his infrastructure package is going to be using the popularity of infrastructure repair. That is popular. People want roads. They want highways. They want infrastructure. But they want to use that popularity to get their agenda passed.

Now, in the infrastructure package that the President came out with, only about 7 percent of that actually addresses roads, highways, and bridges. So that is not what we want. We do have a bill coming out of the committee.

The proof is in the numbers. The Biden plan would spend more on electric vehicle charging ports and subsidies for electric cars than it does on roads, bridges, and airports combined. You know, I didn't believe that when I first saw it. How can he come out with something that would actually spend more just on electrical vehicles than it does on roads, highways, and bridges? But that is exactly right because it would be \$157 billion for roads, highways, and bridges but \$174 billion for electrical vehicle support.

If this sounds familiar to you, that is because it is. Remember then-President Obama's American "Recovery" Plan that was supposed to be a massive investment in infrastructure with "shovel ready jobs"? Well, less than 5 percent of that bill went into infrastructure. The rest of the \$800 billion went to finance the Obama climate agenda. I guess history really does repeat itself because that same thing is happening today. Worse, it trades responsible pay-for methods with a tax-and-spend approach.

A lot of people here may be too young to remember this, but I remember when the biggest problem we had in the highway trust fund was that we had too much money, that we had too much surplus.

I ask the Presiding Officer, can you believe that, because you haven't been here that long? But that actually was the problem. The highway trust fund was actually more than it needed to be.

I can remember back during the Clinton administration, I was pretty upset when he took several billion dollars out of that program. The surplus was there—I grant you that—but nonetheless we knew that leaner times were coming and that we would end up with a highway program that we would not be able to pay for out of the highway trust fund if we let people take money out of that trust fund.

But, anyway, a lot of people here may be too young to remember that, but that actually did happen.

One of the unique things about our highway system is the "user pays; user benefits" model. At a recent EPW hearing that we had—that was just 2 weeks ago—every single witness was in agreement that users who benefit should pay into the system. They all agreed that electric vehicles should be paying their fair share to maintain and improve our infrastructure. But, instead, the Biden plan takes the tax-and-spend approach, increasing the deficit and raising our corporate tax rate, undoing the historic tax cuts that we achieved under the previous administration, the Trump administration.

People hear that, and they don't fully appreciate just what it means. They think that corporate tax rates won't affect them. But the people hurt the most by the higher corporate tax rate tend to be in the most vulnerable categories. That is because higher taxes on job creators not only hurts American competitiveness around the world, but it means lower wages, lower GDP growth, and fewer jobs to go around.

In fact, the nonpartisan CBO found that 70 percent of the savings businesses got when they lowered the corporate tax rate in the Trump tax cuts went straight to worker wages, and the Biden plan would undo that very successful program. A study done by Rice University found that raising the corporate tax rate back to 28 percent, like the Biden plans do, will actually kill 1 million jobs in just 2 years.

Before the pandemic, the economy was growing fast, thanks in large part to the historic tax cuts and the regulatory reforms that drove the record job growth.

In fact, we had the best economy in my lifetime, prior to the pandemic problem that came along. And now, 12 months into the pandemic, as many States are just now allowing businesses to reopen, the administration is looking to raise taxes on job creators who can get our economy back on track.

The White House said it was serious about infrastructure investment, and I am committed to working with the President and my colleagues in the Senate to do this. It can be done this year, just as it has been many times in the past, but it needs to be real infrastructure and not just a big-spending liberal climate bill.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote for this motion to proceed to the bipartisan Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021, otherwise known as DWWIA.

As the ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I have been working closely with Chairman CARPER and Senators DUCKWORTH, LUMMIS, CARDIN, and CRAMER to craft meaningful legislation that addresses our country's aging